

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 ACDA-12
OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 EB-08 SIL-01 LAB-04 /103 W
-----126782 261704Z /42

O R 261559Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3348
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 6814

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJ: HERUT'S FRUSTRATION, BEGIN AND THE PEACE PROCESS

1. SUMMARY: HERUT IS FRUSTRATED. DESPITE BEGIN'S
POSITION AS PRIME MINISTER, ITS LEGITIMACY WITH THE ZIONIST
ESTABLISHMENT IS NOT FULLY ACKNOWLEDGED. THE LIBERALS
AND THE DMC APPEAR TO HERUT MEMBERS AS PART OF A CONSPIRACY
TO KEEP THEIR FACTION IN A SUBORDINATE ROLE. THE OTHER
COALITION PARTNERS, IN TURN, ARE FEELING INCREASINGLY
DISCOMFITTED BY HERUT PRESSURE WHICH FURTHER UNDERMINES
THE COHESION OF A GOVERNMENT ALREADY BESET BY DIFFERENCES
OVER SETTLEMENTS AND THE PEACE PROCESS. ALL OF THIS IS
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AN INTEGRAL PART OF BEGIN'S CALCULATIONS AS HE DECIDES
HOW TO MANAGE THE DISCUSSION OF THE TWO U.S. QUESTIONS
TO ISRAEL IN THIS SUNDAY'S CABINET MEETING. THESE IN-
CREASINGLY INSISTENT VOICES FROM HERUT WON'T MAKE IT ANY
EASIER FOR HIM EVENTUALLY TO GIVE WASHINGTON A POSITIVE
RESPONSE. AT THE SAME TIME, BEGIN WON'T WANT TO TERMINALLY
OFFEND THE LIBERALS OR DRIVE OUT THE DMC OVER THIS ISSUE.

THUS, IT WILL NOT BE SURPRISING IF EQUIVOCATION IS THE
CABINET ORDER OF THE DAY. END SUMMARY

2. THE HERUT RANK AND FILE ARE RESTLESS AND FRUSTRATED.
MEMBERS WISH THE PARTY TO PLAY A MORE INFLUENTIAL ROLE
WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT COALITION AND PUSH GOVERNMENT POLICY
FURTHER INTO HERUT'S POPULIST-REVISIONIST IDEOLOGICAL
FRAME. WITH 20 MK'S, HERUT REMAINS THE LARGEST FACTION
IN THE COALITION, YET IT HAS LITTLE TO SHOW IN TERMS
OF PATRONAGE OR A POLICY-MAKING ROLE ONE YEAR AFTER THE
LIKUD VICTORY FOR WHICH IT CLAIMS PRINCIPAL CREDIT.

3. DESPITE BEGIN'S POSITION AS PRIME MINISTER, HERUT'S
LEGITIMACY WITHIN THE ZIONIST ESTABLISHMENT IS NOT FULLY
ACKNOWLEDGED EITHER BY THE OPPOSITION, WHICH HAS ALWAYS
VIEWED HERUT AS POLITICALLY UNRESPECTABLE, OR EVEN BY
ITS OWN LIBERAL AND DMC COALITION PARTNERS. THE LIBERALS
RUN ECONOMIC POLICY; THE DMC IS IN CHARGE OF SOCIAL AND
LABOR POLICY; AND HERUT'S DAVID LEVY, MINISTER OF IMMI-
GRATION-ABSORPTION, IS THE BUTT OF CONTEMPTUOUS JOKES.
WHILE EZER WIEZMAN AND ARIK SHARON ARE IDENTIFIED WITH
HERUT, THEIR ORIGINS AND PAST POLITICAL VAGARIES PREVENT
THEM FROM PERSONIFYING FOR THE PARTY CADRES THE SPIRIT
OF THE REVISIONIST MOVEMENT. NOR HAVE THESE TWO ALWAYS
BEEN LOYAL TO BEGIN.

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4. TO HERUT MEMBERS THE LIBERALS AND THE DMC APPEAR
AS PART OF A CONSPIRACY TO KEEP THEIR FACTION IN A SUB-
ORDINATE ROLE. IN THEIR EYES BEGIN WAS PREVENTED BY HIS
OWN COALITION PARTNERS FROM SELECTING HIS CANDIDATE FOR
THE PRESIDENCY. HE IS AGAIN BEING DEFIED IN HIS EFFORTS
TO PLACE HERUT LEADERS IN KEY POSTS OF THE JEWISH AGENCY,
ANOTHER TRADITIONAL ANTI-HERUT BULWARK. THE PARTY CADRES
ARGUE TO BEGIN THAT TO THE VICTORS BELONG THE SPOILS. HOW-
EVER, THEY SEE LABOR STALWARTS REMAINING IN KEY GOVERNMENT
POSITIONS -- MOST GOI DIRECTOR GENERALS HAVE STAYED IN
PLACE, DINITZ IS IN WASHINGTON -- AND THE LIBERALS AND DMC
REFUSE TO REDUCE THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER OF THE
HISTADRUT WHICH IS RUN BY THE ALIGNMENT.

5. IN ARGUING FOR MORE INFLUENCE, HERUT CLAIMS THAT IT
ENJOYS THE EVER-GROWING SUPPORT OF THE WORKING CLASS,
MANY OF WHOM TURNED FROM THE LABOR PARTY TO LIKUD IN THE
GENERAL ELECTION AND LATER IN THE HISTADRUT BALLOTING.
A RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE LABOR PARTY ON HOW PEOPLE
WOULD VOTE IN THE NOVEMBER MUNICIPAL ELECTION INDICATES
THAT HERUT MAY GAIN A MAJORITY IN SOME 15 DEVELOPMENT

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TOWNS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ALIGNMENT.

6. THE OTHER COALITION PARTNERS, IN TURN, ARE FEELING
INCREASINGLY DISCOMFITTED BY STRESSES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT
AND INTRA-PARTY FIGURES WHICH ARE FURTHER UNDERMINING
THE COHESION OF THE COALITION, ALREADY BESET BY DIFFERENCES
OVER SETTLEMENTS AND THE PEACE PROCESS. IN PARTICULAR,
THE FOLLOWING ISSUES COULD FURTHER STRAIN HERUT'S RELATION-
SHIPS WITH ITS COALITION PARTNERS:

A) DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE DMC. WILL IT SPLIT, REMAIN IN
THE COALITION OR BOLT? A CABINET RESHUFFLE BECAUSE OF DMC'S
PARTIAL OR COMPLETE DEPARTURE WOULD RISK TIPPING THE
PRECARIOUS BALANCE OF REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE CABINET,
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AND BEGIN WILL TRY TO AVOID CHANGING THE STATUS QUO.

B) THE RENEWED DEMAND BY AGUDAT YISRAEL FOR ANTI-ABORTION LEGISLATION. DESPITE A COALITION AGREEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SUCH LEGISLATION, DMC -- A LATECOMER IN THE COALITION -- IS ALREADY ON RECORD OPPOSING IT. HERUT SUPPORTS THE NRP AND THE AGUDAT YISRAEL AND WANTS IMPOSITION OF COALITION DISCIPLINE. IF THIS ISSUE COMES TO A HEAD, THERE WILL BE A REAL ROW WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

C) LIKUD SPONSORSHIP OF MAYORALTY CANDIDATES FOR THE NOVEMBER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. HERUT SEEKS TO CHALLENGE LONG-STANDING AGREEMENTS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY SUPPORT FOR LIBERAL AND HERUT CANDIDATES IN THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES. OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE WILL BE THE HAIFA RACE. LIKUD IS COMMITTED TO BACK A LIBERAL AND HERUT WANTS TO RUN ITS OWN CANDIDATE. THIS ARGUMENT WILL GET HOTTER AS THE MONTHS PASS.

7. COMMENT: BEGIN IS AWARE OF THESE TENSIONS. HE IS ON NOTICE TO GIVE SATISFACTION TO HERUT MILITANTS, BUT IF HE DOES, HE WILL CREATE NEW PROBLEMS FOR HIMSELF WITH THE LIBERALS, THE DMC AND THE HISTADRUT. IN ADDITION, SHOULD HE DIVERGE FROM HERUT'S HARDLINE POSITION ON FOREIGN AND SECURITY ISSUES, HE WILL FIND HIMSELF IN FURTHER TROUBLE WITH THE RANK AND FILE. WEIZMAN'S SHARP LOSS OF POPULARITY IN HERUT AS A RESULT OF HIS ADVOCACY OF PRAGMATISM IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT HAS NOT BEEN LOST ON BEGIN. NEITHER HAS THE MEMORY OF THE NEAR DEFEAT LAST JANUARY OF HIS CANDIDATE FOR MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO BY THE HERUT CENTRAL COMMITTEE BECAUSE IT DISAPPROVED OF HIS PEACE PLAN. ALL OF THIS IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF BEGIN'S CALCULATIONS AS HE DECIDES HOW TO MANAGE THE DISCUSSION OF THE TWO U.S. QUESTIONS TO ISRAEL IN THIS SUNDAY'S CABINET MEETING. AND THESE INCREASINGLY INSISTENT VOICES FROM HERUT WON'T
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MAKE IT ANY EASIER FOR HIM EVENTUALLY TO GIVE WASHINGTON A POSITIVE RESPONSE. AT THE SAME TIME, BEGIN WON'T WANT TO TERMINALLY OFFEND THE LIBERALS OR DRIVE OUT THE DMC OVER THIS ISSUE. THUS, IT WILL NOT BE SURPRISING IF EQUIVOCATION IS THE CABINET ORDER OF THE DAY.
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